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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 12/31/09

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(1) Editorial: Japan-India security cooperation: Prime Minister must
reacknowledge the importance of the United States

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December 31, 2009

In his recent summit meeting with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan
Singh, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama agreed on an action plan to
promote security cooperation and defense exchanges centering on
periodical vice-minister-level talks of foreign and defense
officials.

Sharing values with Japan and the United States, India also has
common interests with Japan in the war against terrorism, combating
piracy, and the defense of sea lanes. Except for the United States,
India is the second country after Australia for Japan to hold
vice-minister-level talks with an eye to (two-plus-two)
ministerial-level talks. We hope to see Japan-India security
cooperation expanded and deepened in order to put the brakes on

China's military rise as well.

Nevertheless, the development of strategic cooperation between Japan, the United States, Australia, and India must be achieved by always focusing on the Japan-U.S. alliance. Prime Minister Hatoyama should reacknowledge the presence and role of the United States, and make efforts to rebuild and strengthen the relationship of trust between the United States and Japan.

Along with China, India, which has a population of over one billion, has increased its presence in Asia and the world. Japan can cooperate with India in a wide range of fields, such as through talks on an economic partnership agreement (EPA), climate change, nuclear nonproliferation, and industrial and technological cooperation, in addition to security and defense. Japan also needs to continue to urge India to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

The vice-minister-level talks, on which an agreement was reached recently, will be launched in accordance with a joint declaration signed in October 2008 by then Prime Minister Taro Aso and Prime Minister Singh. For the time being, the talks will focus on: (1) the defense of sea lanes connecting the Middle East and East Asia, (2) antipiracy measures, and (3) disaster relief.

In a summit meeting held late last month, U.S. President Barack Obama also announced his intention to strengthen strategic cooperation between the United States and India, saying that the two countries are indispensable partners to each other. It is natural for Japan, the United States, Australia, and India, which share such

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values as freedom and democracy, to deepen their multilayered cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

The question is whether the Prime Minister intends to consistently adhere to such strategic thinking. The path to Japan-India cooperation was laid out under the previous administration led by the Liberal Democratic Party and was solidified by a visit to India (in the summer of 2007) by then Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and a summit by former Prime Minister Taro Aso. It was a matter of course for Prime Minister Hatoyama to make the decision to continue this policy course.

The Prime Minister enthusiastically said it was good that an agreement was reached on sea lanes and combating piracy. But he seems to have a serious lack of awareness of the United States' role in this field.

America's support is essential in all areas, including cooperation between the Indian Navy and Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force. Despite that, the United States has become more distrustful of Japan due to the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan and other matters. Even an American newspaper wrote that the "United States is concerned about and distrustful of the mercurial prime minister." For the sake of the security and national interests of Japan, the Prime Minister should make decisions that place top priority on the Japan-U.S. alliance.

(2) Government making serious efforts to formulate EPA strategy to promote negotiations with Australia, ROK, India, China, others

ASAHI (Page 2) (Full)
December 31, 2009

Shingo Takano

The Hatoyama administration will start vigorous discussions to promote economic partnership agreements (EPAs) aimed at liberalizing trade with the major countries and regions, among other things. The Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) and other ministries will formulate an "EPA strategy," which will serve as the new administration's basic policy, and will include policies on negotiations with the U.S. and the European Union (EU). However, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF) is taking a cautious stance out of its concern about the impact on domestic

agriculture. Some complications can be expected.

One of METI's top political appointees says enthusiastically: "We would like to formulate an EPA strategy as soon as possible." A senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) official has a plan to draw up a strategy before the next round of EPA negotiations with Australia next spring.

The two ministries are keen on stepping up the formulation of a strategy in order to find a breakthrough for progress in the sluggish negotiations with Australia, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and India. Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama met Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Dec. 29, but they merely agreed on "accelerating the negotiations" for a Japan-India EPA.

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A mid-term policy to enter into negotiations with the U.S. and EU will also be studied. The business sector has been strongly demanding that the new administration establish its negotiation

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stance to enter into formal negotiations with the U.S. and EU, but this has not happened.

The reason why certain government offices are keen on developing a strategy is because Japan has been lagging behind the ROK, which is a trading nation like Japan. The ROK made a bold decision to liberalize its market for agricultural products and succeeded in reaching an agreement with the U.S. and the EU on a free trade agreement (FTA), which is the main component of an EPA. On the other hand, Japan has not made any significant progress since its EPA with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) took effect in December 2008, except for initiating negotiations with Peru. This is because there are no more countries and regions with which Japan can easily negotiate compromises on the liberalization of its agricultural market.

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada proposed in October the creation of a committee to discuss ways to promote EPAs, consisting of the MOFA, METI, and MAFF ministers and the finance minister. The committee met in November and December and has been looking at ways to move forward through political leadership.

However, there is a persistent opinion that "the success of the discussions depends on MAFF" (according to a senior METI official). During the recent general election, the Democratic Party of Japan had at first included the "signing of a Japan-U.S. FTA" in its manifesto but later changed this to "promoting negotiations for a FTA." This was because of the farmers' strong resistance to the influx of cheap U.S. agricultural and livestock products. There is an opinion that since a House of Councillors election is taking place next summer, the government will not be able to formulate a strategy that will lead to the liberalization of the agricultural market in consideration of the farming vote.

Status of EPAs with the major countries and regions

Country/region status issues

ROK Talks started in December 2003, suspended after November 2004
Gap remains with the ROK worried about increasing trade deficit with Japan

India Talks started in January 2007 Stuck over India's demand for simplifying approval of generic drugs; on Dec. 29 leaders of both countries agreed on "accelerating negotiations"

Australia Talks started in April 2007 Failure to reach compromise on Australia's demand for broad liberalization of agricultural market
China Study by private sector going on under the Japan-China-ROK framework; joint industry-government-academic study to start in first half of 2010 Extent of China's demand for market liberalization unclear

U.S. Study by private sector going on Persistent concerns about the U.S. as a major agricultural country; prospects uncertain

EU Study by private sector going on Joint report issued in July 2008 but failed to lead to actual negotiations

(3) First 100 days of U.S. Ambassador to Japan: Sudden storms

Ken Moriyasu, international news reporter

It is probably quite unusual for an ambassador to Japan to be so

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busy from the beginning of his tour. Before he could finish making courtesy calls in Nagata-cho and Kasumigaseki, the change of administration took place in Japan. He ended up having to do another round of courtesy calls on the cabinet ministers. There were mounting issues facing him on his first visit to Japan. He suddenly became a negotiator for the issue of the relocation of the Futenma Air Station and was also given the heavy responsibility of ensuring the success of the President's visit to Japan. We looked back on the first 100 days of U.S. Ambassador to Japan John Roos, who has had to brave sudden storms.

Ambassador Roos delivered a speech at a hotel in Tokyo on the afternoon of Dec. 4. Immediately after his speech, he was informed that the Japanese side had given up on making a decision on the Futenma issue before the end of the year, which made him furious (Kyodo News).

Interest in nurturing venture businesses at the beginning

Roos arrived at Narita Airport with his wife Susan and two children on Aug. 19. He told reporters that, "In Silicon Valley, nothing is impossible. If Japan and the United States work together, there is nothing we cannot accomplish." He spoke of aspirations befitting a former lawyer in Silicon Valley.

The first things he saw in Japan struck him as novel. On the first weekend, he and his family rode the subway and went to see a Bon Festival dance near his official residence. He was impressed with the cleanliness of the subway and exclaimed: "It's so clean!"

On the morning of Aug. 25, he made a courtesy call on then Prime Minister Taro Aso, 69, at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei). When Roos said, "We are both alumni of Stanford University," Aso smiled and responded with: "We may be fellow alumni, but there's a 15-year age difference between us." Normally, the next meeting would have been with the foreign minister, but Roos, who hails from the business sector, headed to the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI). He hit it off well with METI Minister Toshihiro Nikai, 70. They had dinner on Sep. 8 and discussed nurturing venture businesses and other subjects. When President Obama delivered a speech at the Suntory Hall in Minato Ward, Tokyo during his visit to Japan in mid-November, he invited Nikai and asked him to take a walk together before entering the hall.

The main issue that Roos focused on in the early days of his tour was why is it that venture businesses like Google do not thrive in Japan? Is this a structural problem?

On Sep. 7, Roos visited the U.S. Department of State's Foreign Service Institute Japanese Language and Area Training Center in Yamate, Yokohama City. He smiled as he brought a freshly grilled hamburger over from the barbecue and said: "Okay, I'm going to eat." The purpose of his visit was to cheer up the American diplomat trainees who were studying Japanese day in and day out. He explained his business experience during his Silicon Valley days to a trainee who listened intensely.

"Every successful company in Silicon Valley has experienced risks. What you need is risk-taking, raising of capital, maintaining good management, universities that provide the knowledge, and a financial market that nurtures businesses. Lifetime employment is unheard of

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in Silicon Valley. In that respect, the culture is very different from Japan. However, Japan has many positive assets. I think

American investors can help in that area."

Toughening of stance after defense secretary's visit; birth of Hatoyama administration on Sep. 16 changed tide

On Sep. 24, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, 62, stated unequivocally, "Basically, I have no intention to change our thinking" on relocating the Futenma Air Station in Okinawa out of the prefecture. Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada, 56, said that, "I would like to fully understand why the current plan came about when there were various other proposals." He asserted that the plan to integrate Futenma with Kadena Air Base should be reexamined.

Roos held several meetings with Okada and Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa, 71, and reiterated that the existing plan is the best option. At this stage, the two sides were still exchanging views quietly.

The visit of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, 66, to Japan on Oct. 20-21 brought on the toughening of Roos's stance. Gates, who was also defense secretary under the Bush administration, is a Republican but is also well respected by the Democrats as a sensible man. He did not concede to Japan's demands at all. He did not smile once during his entire stay. He also refused to receive a salute from the Self-Defense Forces honor guard as a sign of protest. Roos sensed the Pentagon's tough attitude of not agreeing to any revisions to the current relocation plan.

On Nov. 10, Japan and the U.S. agreed on setting up a new working group on Futenma relocation. Okada and Kitazawa participated from the Japanese side, while Roos served as the proxy of the U.S. secretaries of state and defense. This working group became an asymmetrical body in terms of protocol, while Roos came to take on very serious responsibilities. The Japanese prime minister, foreign minister, and defense minister all said different things. He became increasingly frustrated.

From a brief respite to "rage"

On Nov. 13, the U.S. presidential aircraft Air Force One touched down at Haneda Airport and the Ambassador's friend and boss, the President of the United States, arrived in Japan. The Ambassador and the President hugged each other. Mt. QDQ7QW|Cball is Mr. and Mrs. Roos's favorite pastime, but Japanese TV stations do not show college football games. They had a hard time finding a way to receive the broadcast. Through a process of trial and error, they found out that the game would be shown on the Internet, so it would be possible to watch the game in real time at the Ambassador's official residence. Roos was so happy about this he decided to invite the Prime Minister and his wife. The fact that Stanford lost that game might have been a bad omen.

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In his speech delivered at a hotel in Tokyo on Dec. 4, Roos said: "Next year marks the 50th anniversary of the revision of the Japan-U.S. security treaty. It will take serious work to define the future of the alliance. It will also require that we resolve the current issues we are now working through expeditiously," calling for a decision on the Futenma issue before the end of the year. Right after the speech, he was told at the working group's meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Japan had given up on making a decision before year-end. He was enraged.

Soon after he took up his post as Ambassador, Roos said with a beer in his hand: "The law firm I ran in Silicon Valley employed over 700 talented lawyers and had 3,000 corporate clients. The running of the embassy is probably a bit easier than that." He probably didn't anticipate the rough sailing he was about to face. However, solving difficult problems is his forte. This is an opportunity for him to demonstrate the skills he developed as a lawyer in Silicon Valley.

(Related column) Ambassador Roos and President Obama

Mr. Roos has consistently been described as "a person close to the President." However, what is this description of "closeness" based

on? We asked him the following question in an interview on Sep. 9, three weeks after he assumed his post: "How frequently are you in contact with the President? Do you call him or send him e-mail?"

The reply was dismissive: "I have a relationship of trust with the President. I don't want to discuss the details of our methods (of communication)."

The real answer was found via an unexpected source.

In late October, President Obama initiated an interesting experiment. He began to make public the names of all visitors to the White House. A log listing the name, arrival time, departure time, destination, room visited, and purpose of visit of all visitors would be published.

Information on who a leader meets with and when he meets with them is top-level intelligence. The log clearly reveals how much time the President spends with people who are supposedly "close" to him.

This log shows that Ambassador Roos is one of the ambassadors who have visited the White House most frequently. The information from the log reveals even how Roos came to be appointed as ambassador.

A reception to celebrate St. Patrick's Day was held at the White House in the early evening on March 17. Roos, a major donor of political funds during the presidential election, was invited to this party. However, before the reception began, Roos had a meeting lasting for 80 minutes from 3:53 p.m. with Donald Gips, a senior member of Obama's transition team, at the Old Executive Office Building (OEB), which is the administrative wing of the White House. It is believed that they took advantage of the reception to discuss the possibility of Roos's joining the administration.

The "rank" of officials Roos met gradually went up. On June 10, Roos met Jeffrey Bader, National Security Council senior director for Asian affairs, for about two hours. On June 22, he met again for one hour with one of the President's closest confidants, Senior Presidential Adviser and Assistant Valerie Jarrett.

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Finally, Roos had a one-on-one meeting with President Obama at the Oval Office on Aug. 6. Roos visited the White House six times before he took up his post in Tokyo. (Since the data is not published until three months have elapsed, information on Roos's visits after he became ambassador will only become available in late December, at the earliest.)

ROOS